

Expanding organic farming urged for food security

Staff Correspondent

AGRICULTURE experts at a seminar on Thursday called for expanding the organic farming in the country to ensure food security.

They also emphasised establishing a national accreditation body to certify organic crops produced to facilitate their exports.

They made the remarks at an expert consultation meeting on organic farming in Bangladesh at Sech Bhaban in the capital.

Andre Leu, president of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement, Germany, attended the programme as chief guest.

Hortex Foundation organised the expert consultation meeting attended by professors from agricultural universities, officials and representatives from government and non government institutions.

Presenting a paper, Saleh Ahmed, post harvest and quality assurance expert at

Hortex Foundation, said organic sector in Bangladesh emerged in 1988 and by 2006, the country became the second in Asia with 1,77,700 hector of lands under organic farming that estimated two per cent of total agricultural land.

'So far, there is no evidence of any organised domestic market for organic products in the country,' he said.

He said production and marketing of organic produces were mainly done by contract farming for private organisations, companies or chain shops and it did not ensure fair price for the farmers.

Shaikh Tanvir Hossain, sustainable agriculture adviser to Friends In village Development Bangladesh, said the government should take effective initiative through institutional approach to introduce organic farming in Bangladesh.

He suggested creating awareness among produc-

ers and consumers, developing national organic policy, incorporating curricula in the courses of academic institutions and developing certification and regulation system and forming organic certification body.

Andre Leu said organic system had higher yields than conventional farming in whether extremes such as droughts, heavy rainfall and other natural calamities.

'Research shows that organic systems use water more efficiently...It has better infiltrations, retention and delivery to plants helps avoid drought damage,' he said.

AFM Fakhru Islam Munshi, former state minister for agriculture, said supermarket was growing in the country and these markets were boosting the demand for organic products.

'We can produce 2,00,000 tonnes of organic honey in Bangladesh every year.'